

Margaret, daughter of Charles V., and widow of Duke Alexander de Medici, and from her title of Madama the villa takes its name. The building was partially restored, though never completed, and Margaret resided there on her marriage with Ottavio Farnese. The crown of Naples afterwards became possessed of it, with the rest of the Farnese property, through a marriage with that family.

So large a number of arabesque decorations were executed by the pupils and followers of Raffaello, and so great was the skill acquired by them in this art, that it is now difficult to ascertain to whom we owe the beautiful arabesques which still decorate many of the palaces and country-houses in the neighbourhood of Rome. After the premature death of Raffaello, the bond that had united the brotherhood which had gathered around his person was snapped, and those who had so ably worked with him spread themselves in various directions throughout Italy, carrying with them the experience and knowledge they had acquired in the conduct of the great undertakings placed under his charge. Thus sown broadcast over the land were the elements of painted arabesque decoration. In proportion, however, as the artists, by whom subsequent works were undertaken, removed from the classic influences of Rome, their styles became more pictorial, and less purely decorative; and in the seventeenth century the arabesque manner became almost entirely merged in such florid decorations as suited the extravagant ideas of architectural magnificence nourished by the Jesuits. In the days of Bernini, and at a later period in those of Borromini, the Stuccatore triumphed in every species of flourish, while in the scanty openings left between the fluttering wings, and draperies of angels and saints suspended in vaults and cupolas in mid-air, the decorative painter was allowed to place little else than the perspective tricks of the Padre Pozzo and his school.

Before leaving the subject of arabesque altogether, it may be well to trace a few anomalies in its varied local aspects. As may reasonably be inferred, the presence of ancient remains has almost invariably affected the local style of ornament in those spots where they have most abounded. Thus at Rome the school of arabesque ornament most nearly approached the antique, while in cities, such as Mantua, Pavia, and Genoa, other and distinct types and influences may be traced. The Mantuan system of ornamentation, for instance, may be distinctly subdivided into the school of nature and that of conventional vigour approaching caricature, imported by Giulio Romano, and a reflex of the favourite Paganism of Rome. In the deserted chambers of the Palazzo Ducale are fast fading into nothingness the graceful frescoes, of which we have presented numerous specimens in Plates LXXXVII. and LXXXVIII.; executed for the most part upon a white ground. Leaves, flowers, and tendrils, frequently wind round a central reed, as at Figs. 7 and 9, Plate LXXXVII.; and in such cases Nature appears as the directly inspiring deity. In other instances, as in Figs. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6, of the same plate, a simple style of convention is followed, in which the hand of the artist sweeps out as wayward fancy prompts, an ever-recurring, yet rarely monotonous, series of scrolls and curves; the leading points of which are generally accentuated by calices, and the dominant lines of which are adorned, and from time to time interrupted, by foliage of parasitic growth.

A marked difference of style in the decoration of the same building is inaugurated in the specimens (Figs. 1, 2, 4, and 5), we have collected in Plate LXXXVIII. In them the artist has withdrawn himself farther from nature, retaining at the same time an even more pictorial mode of representation than in the earlier and purer examples. Far be it from us to assert that beauty of the highest and most architectonic character may not be obtained in ornament entirely conventional in conception; but certain it is that to be agreeable such ornament should be expressed in a simple and flat style of treatment, both as regards light, shade, and colour. In direct proportion as the elements of which an ornament is composed have been taken with more or less divergence from the ordinary aspect of nature, so should the mode be varied in which that ornament should be portrayed. Thus, in the more refined arabesques of Plate LXXXVII., in which the forms of growing plants

have been freely sketched from the garden and field, an amount of delicate modelling and indication of accidental effect is admissible, which in the representation of the more absolutely conventional elements of the specimens given in Plate LXXXVIII., strikes us as somewhat officious and feeble. Already in the bustle of line, the fluttering ribbons, and vague jewelled forms of No. 5, and in the monotonous masques and foolscaps of No. 1 (Plate LXXX.), may be traced that tendency to caricature which disfigured so much that the genius of Romano threw off with masterly power, but unfortunately with too great fecundity. So long, as at the Villa Madama, and in other of his Roman works, his exuberance was controlled by association with artists of purer taste than himself, there is little with which to reproach him; but when he subsequently emerged into the "Gran Signore" at Mantua, his vanity fairly intoxicated him, and with much that was beautiful he blended not a little that was ridiculous.

The specimens of his arabesques, which we have collected in Plate LXXXVIII., illustrate at once his ability and his weakness as an ornamentist. Unable to divest himself of his recollections of the antique, and at the same time too egotistic to be content with its careful reproduction, the motives he borrowed from it assume an aspect of unquiet rarely to be recognised in the remains of classic antiquity. The motives he derived from Nature are equally maltreated, since he gathered flowers from her bosom only to crush them in his rude grasp. There are yet, however, a daring in his fancy, and a rare sweep and certainty in his handling, which must secure for him an honourable niche in the Temple of Art. Like "Van who wanted grace, yet never wanted wit," it is on the score of taste that he who in his time was one of its chief arbiters most frequently fails. This fallibility is stamped upon several of the ornaments we have engraved in Plate LXXXIX., which are taken principally from the Palazzo del Te, at Mantua. Thus, in No. 2, a scroll ornament freely dashed out is entirely spoilt by the ludicrous object from which it springs. Again in No. 3, the ridiculous masques seem sneering at the graceful forms which surround them; and in No. 4, nature and the antique are alike maltreated. No. 6 in the same plate "points a" severe "moral." Servile, where an ornament should be most free in the disposition of its main lines; and free, where deference to some received type of form ceases to be servile, in the accessory elements of which it is composed,



Typographic Ornament from one of the productions of the early Parisian Press. (Stephans' Greek Testament.)

his running scroll, which is adapted from one of the commonest patterns of antiquity, betrays at once Giulio's feebleness of imagination, and his want of taste.

The peculiar influence of local association upon styles of ornament, which we have already noticed in the case of arabesques, may be traced with equal facility in the best typographic and xylographic illustrations of the early printers. Thus, in the ornaments, Figs. 4-7, 9-16, Plate XC., taken from the celebrated "Etymologion Magnum," printed at Venice in the year 1499, the forms of the ornament, and the almost even distribution of the "pieni" and "vuoti," have been evidently based on the style of those Oriental or Byzantine fragments, in which Venice was so pre-eminently rich. Many of the Aldine initial letters in the last-named plate, appear as though they might have been engraved by